

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3421

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 GENEVA 8830

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SCHAUFEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: RH, UK, PFOR

SUBJECT: RHODESIAN CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 6 MEETING WITH
OBSERVERS

1. I INVITED THE OBSERVER DELEGATIONS TO MEET ME PRIOR
TO MY DEPARTURE FOR WASHINGTON. MARK CHONA AND DUNSTAN
KAMANA (ZAMBIA), SALIM (TANZANIA), FOREIGN MINISTER MOGWE
(BOTSWANA), RAFAEL MAGUNI AND FERNANDO HONWANA (MOZAMBIQUE),
E.C. ANYAOKU (COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT) AND MODIBO (NIGERIA)
CAME TO OUR MISSION FOR THE MEETING WHICH LASTED AN HOUR.

2. THE OBSERVERS WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR BELIEF THAT THE
CONFERENCE COULD MAKE NO PROGRESS UNTIL THE DATE OF
INDEPENDENCE HAD BEEN SETTLED. THE NATIONALISTS WOULD
NOT DISCUSS THE FORMULATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT OR
ANY OTHER SUBJECT UNTIL THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN RESOLVED.
IF IT IS NOT RESOLVED, SALIM SAID, THE CONFERENCE WILL
BE IN "SERIOUS DIFFICULTY." THE OBSERVERS ARE NOT
PREPARED TO PUSH THE NATIONALISTS BEYOND THEIR PRESENT
POSITION BECAUSE THE NATIONALISTS HAVE MADE UP THEIR
MINDS BECAUSE THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS AGREE THAT A
SHORTER, RATHER THAN A LONGER, PERIOD OF TRANSITION IS
IN ZIMBABWE'S INTERESTS.

3. THE ISSUE, AS MODIBO OF NIGERIA POINTED OUT, HAS
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OAAONE OF PROFOUND PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

SMITH'S DEPARTURE, HIS STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS SINCE HIS RETURN TO RHODESIA, HIS APPOINTMENT OF VANDERBYL TO REPLACE HIM IN GENEVA AND HIS STUBBORNNESS OVER THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE HAVE LED THE NATIONALISTS, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, TO CONCLUDE THAT SMITH IS NOT SERIOUS IN HIS COMMITMENT TO CONCEDE INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE. AS CHONA REMARKED, THE NATIONALISTS FEEL THEY HAVE MADE A CONCESSION. THEIR LAWYERS CONCLUDED 9 MONTHS WOULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT TIME TO COMPLETE THE NECESSARY LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES. THE NATIONALISTS TOOK A POLITICAL DECISION AND ADVANCED THE DATE TO 12 MONTHS. THE RHODESIANS HAVE STOOD FIRM ON 23 MONTHS BUT IF THE BRITISH CAN BRING THE RHODESIANS TO 15 MONTHS CHONA BELIEVES THAT THE NATIONALISTS WILL RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION.

4. CHONA REMARKED THAT HE HAD MET THE DELEGATION OF RHODESIAN FARMERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS AND HAD FOUND THEM REASSURE

BY THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE NATIONALISTS. THE FARMERS WHO SAID THEY REPRESENTED "RHODESIA'S DEPT OF HUMAN FEELING" STATED THEY SAW ADVANTAGES IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TRANSITION IF THEY COULD BE REASSURED THE TRANSITION WOULD BE SMOOTH AND THE INTERESTS OF EUROPEANS RESPECTED AFTER INDEPENDENCE.

5. THE OBSERVERS EMPHASIZED THAT WE REMEMBER THE PROBLEMS WHICH THE NATIONALISTS HAVE TO FACE WITH THEIR CONSTITUENCY. THEY UNDERSTOOD CONCERNS FOR EUROPEANS OPINION BUT THE NATIONALISTS HAVE A SERIOUS CONSTITUENCY PROBLEM. IF ZIMBABWE IS TO HOLD TOGETHER AFTER INDEPENDENCE, THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS MUST FEEL THE POLITICIANS HAVE NEGOTIATED AN ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. MODIBO REMARKED THAT THE SUTTON-PRICE "TALKING POINTS", WHICH HE ASSUMED DID NOT REPRESENT RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT OPINION, HAD NONETHELESS LEFT A VERY BAD IMPRESSION. THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN PARTICULAR HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES PLAN TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT AFTER THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IS FORMED AND FOR THAT REASON ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO A SHORT INTERIM PERIOD. CHONA OBSERVED THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF MAIN-SECRET

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MAINTAINING SUPPORT OF THE WHITE CONSTITUENCY MAY SEEM TO BE IMPORTANT NOW, BUT THE INFLUENCE OF HARD LINERS IS DECLINING AND WILL DISAPPEAR WITH INDEPENDENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INFLUENCE OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS IS GREAT AND WILL GROW WITH INDEPENDENCE. IF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS ARE TO BE KEPT IN LINE, AND THEIR SENTIMENTS NOT RESPECTED, THEY WILL TRY TO BLOCK OR UPSET A SETTLEMENT.

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THE BOTSWANA FOREIGN MINISTER, ARCHIE MOGWE, ADDRESSED THE QUESTION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND HOW THE NATIONALISTS WOULD NEGOTIATE IT. MOGWE SAID THAT THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT MUST CLEARLY REPRESENT A TRANSFER OF POWER. THE NATIONALISTS WILL CATEGORICALLY REJECT THE CONCEPT OF A COUNCIL OF STATES SINCE THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED ABOUT IT AND BECAUSE THEY FEEL IT WILL ENTRENCH WHITE POWER. THE OBSERVERS IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS HAVE STRESSED, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO, THAT NATIONALISTS PURPOSES ARE BETTER SERVED BY

DEFINING "PRINCIPLES AND INSTITUTIONS" RATHER THAN DISCUSSING "PERSONALITIES". SALIM SUPPORTED MOGWE'S VIEW AND STATED THAT SHOULD SMITH CONTINUE HIS "SANCROSANCT ADHERENCE TO THE PACKAGE", THE CONFERENCE WILL MAKE NO PROGRESS. IF THE ISSUE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS TO BE RESOLVED, BRITAIN MUST DECIDE HOW IT WILL DEAL WITH ITS RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES. SALIM ARGUED THAT BRITAIN'S FAILURE TO TAKE ON RESIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND THEREBY SETTLE THE PROBLEM OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, WILL BEAR THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TORPEDOING THE CONFERENCE. THE NATIONALISTS SEE TWO CHOICES - EITHER BRITAIN ASSUMES RESPONSIBILITIES OR THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE TURNED INTO A FULL FLEDGED CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH WILL DISCUSS IMMEDIATE INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE.

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM SCHAUFELLE

7. CHONA POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO REDUCE CONFLICT WITHIN THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN CREATE CONDITIONS OF CONFLICT. AS MATTERS STAND,

THERE WILL BE STRONG DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AMONG THE NATIONALISTS. THE PROSPECT OF INTRA-CABINET STRIFE WILL BE REAL. ADDING DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND DISCORD BETWEEN THE COUNCIL OF STATE AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD BE AN UNWISE AND MOST UNHELPFUL WAY TO UNDERTAKE PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

8. ALL OF THE OBSERVERS WERE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE PRESIDENT-ELECT NEEDS TO INDICATE HIS POSITION ON A RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. CARTER'S POSITION COULD BE DEFINED IN GENERAL TERMS BUT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF AMERICAN OBJECTIVES WERE RESTATED AND THE TRACK WHICH WE HAVE PURSUED SINCE LUSAKA RECONFIRMED.

9. HONWANA OF MOZAMBIQUE, WHO REMAINED SILENT THE REST OF THE MEETING, SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING TO BACK THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS FOR "ANOTHER 10 YEARS IF NECESSARY" IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE FULL INDEPENDENCE FOR SIMBABWE. THE MOZAMBIKANS HAD BEEN IMPRESSED IN THE PAST BY BRITISH AND AMERICAN INITIATIVES TO FIND A SETTLEMENT. THEY WERE NOW UNCERTAIN. SMITH'S UNWILLINGNESS IN GENEVA TO REACH A SETTLEMENT IMPLIED THAT HE STILL HAD A "POWER BASE BEHIND HIM." IN MAGUNA'S
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JUDGMENT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE US GIVE ITS REASSURANCE THAT WE AND THE AFRICANS ARE PURSUING THE SAME OBJECTIVES.

10. I REPLIED THAT OUR SIMS WERE THE SAME AS THOSE OF THE AFRICANS. WE SEEK INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE AND BELIEVE THAT ONCE AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT IS ACHIEVED, A CLEAR BREAK WITH THE PAST WILL OCCUR. SMITH'S ADHERENCE TO THE FIVE POINTS IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE NEGOTIATING TACTIC. WE ARE WILLING TO BE HELPFUL AND USE OUR INFLUENCE AND UNDERSTAND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS EACH SIDE HAS WITH RESPECT TO A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE. THE US HAS NO STRONG FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT THAT DATE SHOULD BE BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE, AS IMPORTANT AS IT IS, THE QUESTION SHOULD NOT PRECLUDE CONSIDERATION ON THE REAL PURPOSES FOR WHICH THE CONFERENCE CAME INTO BEING.

11. WE HOPE THERE WILL BE A MUTUAL AGREEMENT AND BELIEVE THAT WHEN THE CONFERENCE ADDRESSES THE QUESTION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, THERE IS AMPLE ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION WHICH WILL STILL PERMIT THE NATIONALISTS TO REACH INDEPENDENCE AND MAJORITY RULE. I REPORTED TO THE OBSERVERS THAT I HAD TOLD EACH NATIONALIST DELEGATION THAT IF THE CONFERENCE FAILS AND THE WAR INTENSIFIED, WE WILL NOT BE INDIFFERENT TO INTERVENTION FROM OUTSIDE. MOREOVER, I COULD NOT IMAGINE ANOTHER SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES AS PROPITIOUS AS THOSE WHICH HAVE EXISTED DURING THE LAST SIX

ONTHS TO DEVELOP AGAIN. WE WILL CONTINUE OUR INVOLVEMENT
BUT THERE ARE FINITE LIMITS TO WHAT WE CAN DO.
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